

Message Text

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70

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /077 W

----- 121224

R 081445Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY BAMA KO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4872

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMA KO 3609

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, ML

SUBJECT: SAUDI CHARGE CALLS

REF: BAMA KO 0835

1. SAUDI CHARGE AHMED SALEH CALLED OCTOBER 8 ON CHARGE TO DISCUSS MALI'S SHAKY FINANCIAL SITUATION. SALEH WAS CONCERNED THAT MALI WOULD SOON BE ASKING HIS GOVERNMENT FOR MORE DIRECT BUDGET SUPPORT (SAUDIS GAVE \$25 MILLION FOR DIRECT BUDGET SUPPORT IN EARLY 1976). CHARGE SAID THAT SITUATION WAS NOT NOTICEABLY WORSE THIS TIME OF YEAR THAN IN PAST: THAT CRUNCH WOULD PROBABLY COME IN JANUARY-FEBRUARY; AND THAT KEY INDICATOR WAS WHETHER OR NOT CIVIL SERVANTS WERE PAID. SO FAR THEY HAD RECPKED R-4 0-6. CHARGE GAVE SALEH ECONOMIC TRENDS REPORT, FOR WHICH HE WAS GRATEFUL, AND PROMISED TO PASS ON WHATEVER ELSE WE HEAR.

2. CHARGE POINTED OUT TO SALEH THAT MALIANS SAT DOWN EVERY YEAR WITH FRENCH, ASKED FOR CERTAIN LEVEL OF AID
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TO WHICH FRENCH RITUALLY RESPONDED WITH LOWER OFFER

UNLESS CERTAIN PROBLEMS WERE ALLEVIATED: MISMANAGEMENT IN STATE ENTERPRISES; INCREASE IN TAX REVENUES; BUDGET CUTS. MALIANS THEN WENT TO SAUDIS WHO PICKED UP THE DIFFERENCE. CHARGE SUGGESTED THAT SALEH MIGHT WISH TO DISCUSS THIS WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR MAZEYRAC. SALEH WAS KEENLY INTERESTED.

3. COMMENT: SALEH'S PRIMARY INTEREST IN BAMAKO IS TO CHECK SOVIET INFLUENCE, BUT HE IS ALSO CONCERNED OVER MALIAN MISMANAGEMENT AND CORRUPTION. SHOULD THE FRENCH AND THE SAUDIS CONCERT THEIR APPROACH TO THE MALIANS AND INSIST ON CERTAIN MANAGEMENT REFORMS, IT COULD MEAN BETTER UTILIZATION OF MALI'S SCARCE RESOURCES. GIVEN SALEH'S CAUTIOUS APPROACH, AND FRENCH EXPERIENCE, HOWEVER, NEITHER ARE LIKELY TO PRESS FOR REFORM TO THE EXTENT THAT THE REGIME WOULD FEEL THREATENED. GRADUAL PRESSURE OVER THE YEARS, HOWEVER, MIGHT WELL BE EFFECTIVE AND WOULD MEET GENERAL US POLICY OBJECTIVE OF FOSTERING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN MALI.
DAWKINS

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